

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6242
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 LONDON 11834

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR YOUNG

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK, US
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S DISCUSSIONS WITH OWEN ON
NAMIBIA AND RHODESIA

REFERENCE: LONDON 11569

INTRODUCTION: FOLLOWING IS AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S REPORT ON
LUNCHEON MEETING WITH OWEN JULY 18 AT WHICH SEVERAL
SENIOR OFFICERS OF FCO WERE PRESENT INCLUDING MINISTER
OF STATE JUDD, UNDER SECRETARY LUARD, PERMANENT UNDER
SECRETARY SIR MICHAEL PALLISER, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY
JOHN GRAHAM, AND OTHERS LISTED IN PARA 3 OF LONDON
11561.

1. WE FOUND DAVID OWEN, ON THE EVE OF HIS VISIT TO THE
UNITED STATES, VERY MUCH IN THE FRAME OF MIND DESCRIBED
BY EMBASSY LONDON IN THE REFTEL. WITH THIS EXCEPTION.
HE HAS LOST NONE OF HIS ACTIVISM OR DETERMINATION. HE
IS PATENTLY DEPRESSED BY HIS FAILURE TO OBTAIN CABINET
APPROVAL OF A COMMONWEALTH FORCE WITH BRITISH PARTICI-
PATION. BUT HE IS ALSO CONVINCED THAT TOO MUCH IS AT
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STAKE FOR US TO DO ANYTHING ELSE BUT CONTINUE OUR
EFFORTS TO PROMOTE A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. IF WE DO
NOT, HE FEARS THAT WE WILL SEE A BLOODBATH IN RHODESIA,
A DOMESTIC BACKLASH IN THE US AND UK THAT COULD BLOCK
FURTHER INITIATIVES ON SOUTHERN AFRICA AND PERHAPS THE
TOPPLING OF MODERATE REGIMES IN THE AREA.

2. OUR DISCUSSION ON NAMIBIA REVEALED OUR SHARED ASSESSMENT OF THE NEED TO PRESS WALDHEIM TO BEGIN THE UN'S CONTINGENCY PLANNING. OWEN THOUGHT YOUR LETTER TO WALDHEIM VERY HELPFUL AND WILL DISCUSS WITH YOU WHETHER HE SHOULD INCREASE THE PRESSURE ON WALDHEIM BY CALLING HIM WHILE HE, OWEN, IS IN THE US. CONCERNING THE KEY ISSUE OF SOUTH AFRICAN TROOP WITHDRAWALS FROM NAMIBIA, OWEN FELT THAT WE SHOULD TRY TO GET THE SOUTH AFRICANS TO ENGAGE IN SOME SYMBOLIC DRAWDOWNS. IT WAS CLEARLY "LUDICROUS" FOR SOUTH AFRICA TO SAY THAT IT WOULD NEGOTIATE THEIR WITHDRAWAL AFTER INDEPENDENCE. OWEN SHARED OUR VIEW THAT WHILE THE SOVIETS COULD ALWAYS VETO A UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN NAMIBIA, THEY WERE UNLIKELY TO DO SO IF WE HAD THE SUPPORT OF THE AFRICAN GROUP. OWEN ALSO SEES THE EARLY APPOINTMENT OF ATISSARI AS CRITICAL. WE DO NOT WANT TO LET THE SOUTH AFRICANS PLACE THEIR ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL IN NAMIBIA BEFORE THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE ARRIVES. IN THAT EVENT, OWEN AGREED, WE MIGHT NEVER BE ABLE TO CONVINCE THE AFRICANS THAT THE ELECTION PROCESS WAS BEING FAIRLY HANDLED. LIKE ALL OF US, OWEN FEELS IT MOST ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

3. ON RHODESIA, OWEN WARNED THAT WE MAY SOON REACH THE STAGE WHERE LAW AND ORDER ARE CRUMBLING. AT A POINT WHERE HE ASSERTED SMITH IS "DELIVERABLE," HE EXPRESSED
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CONCERN OVER THE RHODESIAN ARMED FORCES AND THE POSSIBI-

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LITY OF A COUNTER-COUP BY THEM. HE REGARDS THE KEY ISSUE AS THE PEACEKEEPING QUESTION. WITH BRITISH PARTICIPATION IN A COMMONWEALTH FORCE NOW REJECTED, HE IS URGING WE CONSIDER THE UN AS AN ALTERNATIVE. HE NOTED THAT NIGERIA HAS STATED THAT IT WOULD FIND IT EASIER TO PARTICIPATE IN A UN FORCE AS OPPOSED TO A COMMONWEALTH FORCE. IN THIS REGARD--AND PERHAPS WITH REFERENCE TO A POSSIBLE PROTECTIVE ROLE FOR RHODESIA'S THREATENED NEIGHBORS--HE INFORMED US THAT THE NIGERIANS ARE NOW TRAINING AN "EXPEDITIONARY FORCE" WHICH WILL NOT BE READY FOR SOME TIME. HE CAUTIONED THAT THIS INFORMATION IS SENSITIVE.

4. OWEN SHARED OUR VIEW THAT THE AFRICANS THEMSELVES ARE KEY TO ANY UN INVOLVEMENT (ALWAYS ASSUMING WE COULD GET THE RHODESIANS TO ACCEPT THE UN AND THIS MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE). WE MUST GET KEY AFRICAN LEADERS MORE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS, BECAUSE THEY RESENT SOLUTIONS IMPOSED BY OUTSIDE POWERS AND FOR THIS REASON WILL BE UNWILLING TO APPLY FULL PRESSURE AT KEY POINTS IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. OWEN ACCEPTS THIS POINT FOR BOTH RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA BUT HIS AIDES REMAIN HIGHLY SUSPICIOUS OF THE MOST PLAUSIBLE AFRICAN TO WHOM WE COULD TURN. IN A DEBATE WHICH BROKE OUT
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AMONG THE BRITISH SIDE, OWEN CONTENDED WITH HIS AIDES THAT NYERERE HAD ALWAYS DEALT SQUARELY WITH HIM AND THAT HE THEREFORE HAD A GOOD FEELING ABOUT THEIR RELATIONSHIP. HIS AIDES, HOWEVER, ASSERTED TO HIS UNCHANGED DISAGREEMENT THAT NYERERE HAD TALKED OUT OF BOTH SIDES OF HIS MOUTH. WE SUGGESTED THAT WE THOUGHT NYERERE COULD PLAY A ROLE AND WE MIGHT RAISE THIS ISSUE DURING NYERERE'S VISIT TO THE US.

5. WE HAD A BRIEF, INCLUSIVE DISCUSSION OF THE SOVIET ROLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT THE AFRICAN ATTITUDE WILL BE KEY TO THE FINAL SOVIET POSITION. BUT WE ALSO EXAMINED WHETHER WE SHOULD BOTH MAKE AN EFFORT TO PERSUADE THE SOVIETS TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE AND POSITIVE ROLE. WE REACHED AGREEMENT ON TWO CONFLICTING POINTS: ON THE ONE HAND, IT IS NOT IN SOVIET INTERESTS TO BE SEEN AS THE "SPOILER" OF DESIRABLE SOLUTIONS. ON THE OTHER, A MAJOR SOVIET INTEREST

LIES IN PREVENTING ANYTHING WHICH CAN BE SEEN AS A WESTERN "SUCCESS." LUARD FROM THE BRITISH SIDE ARGUED THE ONLY WAY TO INVOLVE THE SOVIETS POSITIVELY WAS TO ACCORD THEM THE KIND OF RECOGNITION IN AFRICA WE HAD ACCORDED THEM IN THE MIDDLE EAST. GRAHAM COMMENTED THAT THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN LUSAKA HAD RECENTLY SHOWN A MORE RESPONSIBLE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM. PERHAPS IT IS TIME TO EXAMINE WHETHER WE CAN FIND SOME WAY TO INVOLVE THE SOVIETS WHICH WOULD NOT BE DESTRUCTIVE OF WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH.

6. ON SOUTH AFRICA, OWEN EXPRESSED HOPE THAT WE COULD DELAY ALL ACTION UNTIL THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. WE POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS NOT REALISTIC. WE WOULD HAVE TO ADOPT SOME POSITIONS AT THE LAGOS ANTI-APARTHEID CONFERENCE
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IN LATE AUGUST. THAT CONFERENCE'S RESULTS IN TURN WOULD DETERMINE THE NATURE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONSIDERATION OF THE APARTHEID ISSUE. CONCERNING LAGOS, WE REPORTED TO OWEN NIGERIAN SUGGESTIONS THAT HIGH LEVEL WESTERN REPRESENTATION COULD DETERMINE THE TONE OF THE CONFERENCE, SUGGESTING THAT HE MIGHT CONSIDER GOING TO LAGOS HIMSELF IF IT WERE NOT TOO INCONVENIENT. OUR COMMON STRATEGY AT LAGOS IS AN ISSUE OWEN WILL WANT TO DISCUSS WITH YOU. WE TOLD OWEN THAT THE KEY IS THE NIGERIAN DESIRE FOR A "SUCCESS" COMPARABLE TO MAPUTO. IF THE WEST APPROACHES THIS CONFERENCE IN A POSITIVE WAY-- EITHER BY REPRESENTATION OR SUBSTANCE--WE SHOULD STAND A GOOD CHANCE OF MOVING IN IT IN A MORE MODERATE DIRECTION AND IN THIS WAY TAMPING DOWN SUBSEQUENT GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION. OWEN COMMENTED THAT THE EC-9 EFFORT TO DEVELOP A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THEIR FIRMS OPERATING IN SOUTH AFRICA WOULD BE SIMILAR TO THE CODE OUR FIRMS VOLUNTARILY ADOPTED BUT TOUGHER, HOPEFULLY DEALING WITH BLACK TRADE UNIONS.

7. THERE WILL BE NO SOLUTIONS TO THE ISSUES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA THROUGH DIPLOMACY AS USUAL. OWEN REALIZES THAT. AS HE REMARKED AT LUNCH, SOMETIMES IN CRITICAL SITUATIONS THERE COME MOMENTS WHEN ONE MUST ACT DECISIVELY EVEN IF THIS MEANS TO TAKE A RISK. OWEN WAS WILLING TO TAKE THAT RISK. HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES TO THIS POINT ARE NOT. BUT HE IS WILLING TO TRY AGAIN

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WITH OUR HELP.

8. IN A SIDE MEETING BETWEEN JOHN GRAHAM OF UK AND CHARLES FRANK OF US, GRAHAM SAID THAT SECRETARY OWEN APPROVED THE FORMATION OF A CORE GROUP IN NEW YORK TO DISCUSS ENFORCEMENT OF RHODESIAN SANCTIONS. GRAHAM ALSO SAID THAT SECRETARY OWEN WOULD RAISE WITH YOU WHETHER YOU COULD AGREE THAT US AND UK, AS THE MAJOR DONORS TO A ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT FUND, WOULD USE THEIR VOTES ON THE BOARD OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS TO HELP ENSURE THAT PROVISION OF AGREEMENT GUARANTEEING PROPERTY RIGHTS AND PENSIONS WOULD BE ENFORCED BY INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE GOVERNMENT. FRANK HAD IMPRESSION THAT GRAHAM WAS GIVING OWEN AN OVER-OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF SMITH'S WILLINGNESS TO COME TO TERMS WITH A US-UK PROPOSAL. THE BRITISH SEEMED TO PLACE TOO MUCH FAITH IN THE IDEA THAT IF A CREDIBLE OUTSIDE FORCE COULD BE ASSEMBLED TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER, SMITH MIGHT FIND US-UK PROPOSALS ACCEPTABLE.

8. THIS TELEGRAM WAS WRITTEN BEFORE NEWS BROKE OF SMITH'S INTENTION TO GO TO HIS ELECTORATE WITH A PLAN FOR AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. MUCH OF WHAT TRANSPIRED BETWEEN OWEN AND US OBVIOUSLY NEEDS RETHINKING IN LIGHT
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OF THIS DEVELOPMENT.

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